

# FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH DIVORCE AMONG MARRIED COUPLES WORKING IN PUBLIC SERVICE OF ENUGU STATE

**NWOBODO, DONATUS NIDIBUIKE, REV. FR. Ph.D. (NIG)**

*Department of Educational Foundations  
Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, Enugu State.  
[nwobodocm@gmail.com](mailto:nwobodocm@gmail.com), 08033028860*

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## *Abstract*

*This study investigated factors associated with divorce among married couples working in public service of Enugu State. The study adopted survey research design. A random sample of 79 divorce couples working in public service of Enugu State were used for the study. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses tested at .05 significant level. Data for the study was collected using a questionnaire Instrument called factors associated with divorce among couples instrument (FAWDACI). The FAWDACI was subjected to face validity and has internal consistency reliability estimate of 0.80 established using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Co-efficient procedure. An item with mean response of 2.5 or more was accepted as a factor associated with divorce. Otherwise the item is interpreted as not a factor associated with divorce. Research questions were answered using mean while hypotheses were tested using t-test statistic. The major findings of the study revealed that age at the time of marriage contributed to divorce among married couples working as civil servants in Enugu State. Moreso, socio-economic factors and childlessness factor were found to be significant factors associated with divorce among married couples working in public service of Enugu State. It was recommended among others, that partners should consider similarity in education, social background, age, financial position, race, religion and social class.*

## Introduction

The term divorce comes from the Latin word 'divortium' which means diverting, separation, leave one's spouse. According to Hornby (2000), the term 'divorce' means a separation or the ending of a relationship between two things. Divorce is the permanent separation of two people who are married to each other (Appathurai 2012), more so, divorce or dissolution of marriage is the final termination of a marriage, cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of marriage between two persons (Wikipedia, 2013). Divorce therefore, is family disorganisation resulting from marriage breakdown among married couples.

There is a remarkable increase in divorce rate worldwide in the recent time. Divorce has escalated in the whole of western society since 1960 and it is probably the single most important social upheaval in society and widespread repercussions (Jack, 1993). Jack (1993), further reported that at the moment it is estimated that nearly 50 percent of current marriages are heading for dissolution. The world's divorce statistics (2002), revealed that an average of 50 percent of new marriages in selected countries of the world end in divorce. That brings us to the need to comprehend the phenomenon of divorce especially among married couples in civil service of Enugu state.

Furthermore, the persistent increase in divorce, separation, annulment and other associated forms of marital dysfunction has catastrophic effects on the spouses, their children and society. Divorce leaves tremendous emotional and psychological pressure and also to some extent, economic pressure not only on the separated spouses but also on all the members of the family (Hegy and Martos, 2000) in Appathurai (2012). For instance, Joyce (2008) in Appathurai (2012) reported that separation of the parents by divorce or annulment (or both) and the daunting reality of

having to live in a single-parent family have devastating effects on children concerned. The devastating effect of divorce does not terminate on children alone, it has cut across adults and society at large. For instance scientific studies revealed that it is not only preschool children who suffer the negative effect of divorce but also the children of school age and adolescents (Robinson, 2009). According to Appathurai (2012), the divorce mentality per se and its effect on children pose serious threat to the future of human society.

Separated spouses (i.e. divorced husbands and wives) who are working in the public service of Enugu state are among the basic unit of the society and this basic unit of the society is adversely affected by divorce. These separated husbands and wives working as civil servants in Enugu state were composed of junior and senior public servants. Junior public servants are on grade level 01 to 06 while senior public servants are on grade level 07 and above. There is tendency of low productivity and increased distress to the divorced spouses. This situation will increase poverty among Nigerians and lead to severe reduction in development.

In fact, the nation's agenda on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) may be denied to the nation if divorce rate is not checked in Nigeria. This could be seen from the effect of divorce on affected couples working as civil servants which include lateness to work, unhappiness, psychological problems associated with broken homes, among others, result to low productivity among such divorcees. Based on this ugly experience, the nation cannot achieve success in 2015 MGDS. This situation demands that factors associated with divorce among married couples in public service of Enugu state be identified and possible recommendations made.

Several factors have been identified in literature as militating against the stability of marriage which subsequently

results to divorce. For instance, among the most influential factors that cause divorce had been and still are the sharp increase in the educational level of young adults, especially women and the closely associated rapid increase in the employment of women outside home (Glick, 2010) such as employment of women in public service. Other factors reported in literature include a growing unwillingness to endure unhappiness in marriage (Bell, 2011), effect of modern technology, psychological and economic factors, liberation of women and the rise in women's movement (Appathurai, 2012).

Moreso the age of bride below the age 22 and the groom below the age of 25 (Patrick, 2012), is a factor responsible for marital dysfunction. Nye (2012) reported that women with high incomes are much more likely to be single or divorced than are either housewives or women employed in occupations with average remuneration. In other words married women offered job opportunities in public service are more likely to divorce their husbands than unemployed women, especially those employed women that earn higher income than their husbands.

Nwobodo (1997) reported that cases of robbery, drug abuse, rape, drunkenness and other forms of juvenile delinquencies among boys as well as drop out syndrome, prostitution element and other related deviant behaviours among girls, contributes to marriage dysfunction in later years of marriage. It appears that they could be other factors yet to be identified that are associated with divorce among married couples working in public service of Enugu State. This study will therefore fill the gap of scarcity of information concerning the factors associated with divorce among married couples working in civil service of Enugu state.

## Statement of the Problem

Studies conducted in relation to divorce revealed that areas covered were on causes and consequences of marital breakdown among couples. Several factors reported in literature as incidences, causes and consequences of divorce among married couples, includes adultery, age of the couples, women increase in educational level and employment outside home, liberation of women and the rise of women's movement and influence of modern technology (Nye, 2010; Patrick, 2010; Glick, 2010; Bell, 2011; and Appathurai, 2012). These reports were on foreign land. There is need to factors associated with divorce locally, especially among civil servants of Enugu state. The problem of this study posed as a question is: What are the document factors associated with divorce among married couples working in public service of Enugu State and its implications for counselling?

## Scope of the Study

This study is limited to factors associated with divorce among married couples who are currently working in public service of Enugu State. It does not extend to couples that are working in non-governmental establishments such as trading, private firms or organisations.

## Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following questions.

1. How does age of spouses, at the time of marriage contribute to divorce?
2. To what extent is childlessness associated with divorce among couples?

## Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis which was formulated to guide the study was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**H01:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the responses of junior and senior public servants on the extent to which socio-economic factors are associated with divorce.

**H02:** There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the responses of divorced husbands and wives on the extent to which childlessness factor is associated with divorce among couples.

## Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. The study was designed to survey the factors associated with Divorce among married couples working in public service of Enugu State with a view to reducing the problem to the barest minimum with the advantage and help of family counselling. This design was considered the most appropriate for a study of this nature because according to Nwagu (1991), descriptive survey research design are those studies which aim at collecting data on and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population.

The 245 cases of divorce registered in all the seventeen (17) Local Government Areas of Enugu State consisted of the target population for the study. A random sample of 79 cases of divorce were drawn and used to the study. The sample was drawn through multi-stage random sampling technique. The first stage involved the researcher using simple random sampling technique to select 8 Local Government Areas. The next stage involved randomly selecting about 10 divorcees from each of the eight

Local Government Areas. For the purpose of data collection, the researcher administered a self-constructed questionnaire instrument called Factors Associated with Divorce among couples instrument (FAWDACI) to divorced couples working in public services in Enugu State. The FAWDACI was a four-points rating scale, namely, very great extent (VGE) (4), great extent (GE) (3), low extent (LE) (2), and very low extent (VLE) (1).

The instrument was subjected to face validity from three experts in Guidance and Counselling unit of University of Nigeria, Nsukka and three lecturers in Measurement and Evaluation of the same University of Nigeria Nsukka. In order to establish reliability of the instrument, the researcher administered the instrument to 35 divorcees in Nsukka Local Government Area. These 35 divorcees did not form part of the main study. Their responses were analyzed with spearman rank order correlation co-efficient so as to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument yielded 0.80.

Moreover, any item with mean response of 2.5 and above was accepted as a factor associated with divorce while those with mean response below 2.5 was interpreted as a factor not associated with divorce. The FAWDAC was administered personally by the researcher to the randomly sampled 79 separated couples that fall within the sample and collected from them by the researcher directly by hand. The effective sample size of 79 was composed of 32 senior public servants and 47 junior public servants. Out of the 79 respondents, 28 were divorced husbands while 51 were divorced women. The instrument collected from them provided data used in analysis. The data collected was analyzed using mean in answering the research questions and t-test statistic in testing the hypotheses.

**RESULTS**

**Table 16.1: How Age at the Time of Marriage Contributes to Divorce.**

S/N	Responses	Frequency and Total Score					Mean Score	Remarks
		VLE (1)	LE (2)	GE (3)	VGE (4)	Total		
	Early marriages are usually built on the foundation of infatuation, which later causes divorce.	13 (7)	52 (41)	60 (57)	71 (67)	196	2.50	Great Extent
	Couples who marry at an early age (before the ages of 18 and 21) lack emotional stability necessary for marital adjustment.	6 (7)	31 (38)	54 (53)	59 (62)	181	2.31	Low extent
	Too early engagement in marriage denies the couple of necessary experiences, knowledge and information regarding marital life, thereby resulting to marriage disfunction.	3 (8)	38 (42)	55 (59)	67 (69)	201	2.54	Great extent
	<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>2.51</b>	<b>Great extent</b>

From Table 16.1, it could be seen that the mean score (responses) of the divorcees on the couples who marry at an early age (before the age of 18) lack the emotional stability necessary for

marital adjustment was 2.31. The mean score of 2.31 was the mean responses of the divorcees who believed that too early engagement in marriage denies the couple necessary experiences, knowledge and information regarding married life. Moreso the mean scores of the divorcees who believed that early marriages are usually built on the foundation of infatuation was 2.50. Moreso, from Table 1, it could be seen that the grand mean was 2.51, which is to a great extent.

**Table 16.3: Responses of Junior and Senior Public Servants on the Extent to which Socio-Economic Factors affect Divorce.**

Responses	N	X̄	SD	DF	t-calculated
Junior servants (x <sub>1</sub> )	47	3.87	0.15	45	2.90
Senior servants (x <sub>2</sub> )	47	2.53	0.15	45	2.90
<b>Grand mean total</b>		<b>2.53</b>			

Table 16.3 indicated that t-calculated value of 2.90 is greater than the critical value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected which leads to the conclusion that there is statistically significant difference in the mean score responses of junior and senior public servants on the extent to which socio-economic factors affect divorce.

**Table 16.2: The Extent to which Childlessness is Associated with Divorce.**

S/ N	Responses	Frequency and Total Score Responses for Each Unit of Response					Mean Score	Remarks
		VLE (1)	LE (2)	GE (3)	VGE (4)	Total		
	Women are usually blamed when children do not come in marriages thereby leading to the women to disengage her husband.	-	69 (66)	72 (72)	70 (72)	211	2.67	Great extent
	Love between couples easily fade after a long period of childlessness, thereby terminating the marriage.	-	(62) 61	(68) 67	(68) 69	197	2.5	Great extent
	Marriages without children are looked upon as incomplete and unfulfilled and so make the couple divorce each other.	-	(55) 48	(60) 62	(60) 66	176	2.23	Low extent
	Men are usually pressurised into the search for a second wife when the first marriage ends up in childlessness, thereby resulting to the dissolution of the first marriage.	-	(63) 68	(69) 69	(69) 65	202	2.6	Great extent
	<b>Grand meant total</b>						<b>2.53</b>	<b>Great extent</b>

Table 16.2 showed that childlessness factors are associated with divorce to a great extent among married couples in Enugu state public service. Specifically, the mean response of the respondents on the extent to which marriages without children are looked upon as incomplete and unfulfilled was 2.67. Again, the mean responses of the divorcees on the extent to which women are usually blamed when children do not come in marriages were 2.5. The table further revealed that the mean score of 2.23 was the responses of the divorcees who believed that marriages without children are looked upon as incomplete and unfulfilled. The mean score of 2.6 represented the opinion of the divorcees who believed that men are usually pressurized into the search for a second wife when the first marriage ends up in childlessness. In other words, childlessness is a factor associated with divorce.

**Table 16.3: Responses of Junior and Senior Public Servants on the Extent to which Socio-Economic Factors affects Divorce.**

Responses	N	X	SD	DF	t-calcul. Value	t-crit. Value
Junior public servants (x <sub>1</sub> )	47	3.87	0.15	45		
Senior Public Servants (x <sub>2</sub> )	32	3.04	0.09	30	2.96	1.96

Table 16.3 indicated that t-calculated value of 2.96 is greater than t-critical value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected which leads to the conclusion that there is statistically significant difference in the mean score responses of junior and senior public servants on the extent to which socio-economic factors affect divorce.

**Table 16.4: Responses of Divorced Husbands and Wives on the Extent to which Childlessness Factor Cause Divorce.**

Responses	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal. value	t-critical value
Divorced Husbands (X <sub>1</sub> )	28	2.95	0.12	26		
Divorced Wives	51	3.19	0.29	49	1.30	1.96

Table 16.4 clearly indicated that t-calculated value (1.30) is less than t-critical value (1.96). The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. This result lead to the conclusion that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the responses of divorced husbands and wives on the extent to which childlessness factor is associated with divorce among couples working in public service of Enugu State.

**Discussion of Results**

Based on the findings of the study, the mean responses of the divorces on how age at the time of marriage contributed to divorce ranged from 3.04 to 3.31. These mean scores on the items of the responses were high (far more than the criterion cut off score of 2.5). This suggests that there is general agreement among the respondents that the age at the time of marriage contributed to divorce. This finding is supported by the earlier postulates of Burke (2008) who noted that marriage is a commitment for one's entire life and so psychological maturity and an acceptable age is absolutely necessary before that commitment may be made. Moreso, Appathurai (2012) supported age factor when he noted that a man cannot validly contract marriage before the completion of his sixteenth year of age.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that childlessness was one of the factors associated with divorce among couples working in public service of Enugu state. This finding was closely related to earlier report of Appathurai (2012) who upheld that the antecedent and perpetual sterility on the part of man or woman invalidates marriage. Burke (2008), further remarked that to blame the woman for not having a child is not right since the problem may be either from the man or from the woman or from both. The mean scores of the responses of divorced husbands and wives on the extent to which this issue of childlessness factor is associated with divorce among couples working in public service did not differ significantly ( P<0.05).

In other words, both divorced husbands and divorced wives were of different consensus on this matter. However, statistically significant difference was found in the mean scores of the responses of junior and senior public servants on the extent to which socio-economic factors are associated with divorce. This finding is in consonance with the earlier postulates of Jan Gorecki in Appathurai (2011) that the growing number of divorce cases has a direct link with the economic growth and the resultant social change. Sociologists have established with some certainty that there is a great risk of divorce when the partners are from diverse socio-economic backgrounds (Appathurrai, 2011). Ideally women with high incomes are much more likely to be single or divorced than are either housewives or women employed in occupations with average remuneration (Nye, 2010). Based on the foregoing it appears that women's employment such as in civil service poses threat to the union of husband and wife.

**Recommendations**

Recommendations were made Based on the Findings of the Study as Follows:-

1. Realising the place of chronological age and maturity in marriage, too early marriages (before the age of 18) should be discouraged by the parents and other adult members of the society
2. Various religious denominations should institute serious marriage counselling programmes for people intending to get married. They should let the couples know that children do not make marriage after all many marriages break up even though there are children for the couple.
3. In seeking of a partner the field of eligible should be scanned by the partners and/or their parents/guardians so that the risk of divorce is reduced when similarity in education, social background, age, financial position, race, religion and generally in social class are considered in marriage.

### Conclusion

The result of this study clearly suggests that the age at the time of marriage contributed to divorce. Moreso, the findings revealed that childlessness was one of the factors associated with divorce among couples working in public service of Enugu state. The study found no statistical significant difference in the mean responses of divorced spouses on the extent to which the issue of childlessness factor is associated with divorce among couples working in public service of Enugu State ( $P < 0.05$ ).

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